

## Community Dietitian

The Health Promotion Unit of the hospital in a nearby town is advertising in the local paper for a dietitian to work in the community. One part of the community dietitian's job involves preparing nutritional information to help people plan their diets, writing leaflets and running clinics throughout the week for special groups.

### VACANCY – COMMUNITY DIETITIAN

We require an enthusiastic, experienced dietitian to join our team of community dietitians. The postholder will be required to provide clinical sessions in health centres and provide support for health promotion activities concerned with the Government's 'Health of the Nation' initiative. Knowledge of food habits of ethnic groups will be valuable. You will also be expected to initiate training for health professionals and client groups. Some community experience would be an advantage but is not essential.

Car driver required. Our competitive salary is accompanied by a range of benefits.

**For an application form and job description, please contact the Personnel Department.**



A recent study of local residents has identified a group of people who emigrated from the Indian subcontinent during the 1970s and set up a thriving textiles business. Although these people are hard working and successful in business and have plenty to eat, several of their children are considered to be at risk of developing rickets. This is a disease where the bones are softened and deformed, e.g. bowed legs, and it arises from deficiency of vitamin D and the failure to absorb enough calcium from the small intestine.

In most parts of the Indian subcontinent it is traditional for women to dress modestly in clothes which have long sleeves and cover their body fully, including the legs. It is quite usual for the children to be dressed in a similar style.

For most people, the major source of vitamin D is through synthesis in skin that is exposed to sunlight during summer months in the UK. Some groups, such as people with dark skin, those who are housebound or wearing concealing clothing may need to rely on dietary supply. Very few foods provide large amounts of vitamin D. Rich sources include fish liver oils and oily fish. Egg yolk, butter and liver provide smaller amounts of the vitamin.





In the United Kingdom some foods are required by law to be fortified with vitamin D. These include margarine and infant formula. Other foods such as chapati flour and breakfast cereals may be fortified on a voluntary basis by manufacturers. As these foods are eaten often, they have helped to eliminate rickets amongst the majority of children in the United Kingdom.

- It can be unusual for Asian people to eat cereals for breakfast.
- Instead of margarine, Asian cooking will often use ghee - a form of clarified butter.

Because of these factors, the Health Promotion Unit has produced a leaflet explaining to parents why it is important to give their children foods which provide vitamin D, and suggesting ways of achieving this.

### Questions

1 a) What is rickets?

b) Suggest two reasons why people from the Indian subcontinent may be at risk of developing rickets.

2. Which foods could improve a person's vitamin D intake?

3. Explain why margarine has to be fortified with vitamin D in the UK.

4. What would the community dietitian's job involve?

5. What key points might the dietitian include in a leaflet which would help parents make sure their children get enough vitamin D? (Explain your answer).